



Application for
SECTION 5309
BUS AND BUS FACILITIES
STATE OF GOOD REPAIR GRANT

FOR THE

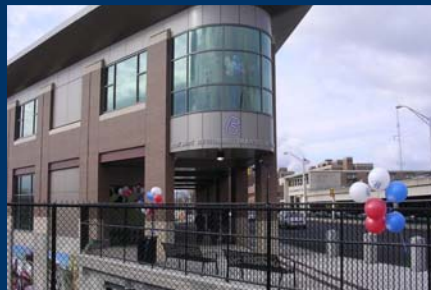
**BRTA'S MODEL PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE RURAL
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION FOR A GREENER FUTURE**

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
BERKSHIRE COUNTY, MA

JUNE 2010

SUBMITTED BY:

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY



APPLICATION

The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) in western Massachusetts, the City of Pittsfield, the City of North Adams, the Town of Great Barrington, and Alternative Vehicle Service Grouping (AVSG) are partnering on BRTA's Model Partnership to Improve Rural Regional Transportation for a Greener Future. The BRTA is committed to redeploying its fixed-route bus service to better respond to regional demands and to improve the availability of service for local and regional riders. This can be realized by implementing a regional service delivery system complemented by point deviation through the utilization of a rural ITS support system along with the acquisition of a new fleet of energy efficient mini-buses. The proposed plan can serve as a rural model for the entire country to provide a sustainable transportation system that is accessible, integrated and efficient. The \$31.5 million investment associated with the project generates economic benefits that are estimated to be eighty-two times greater than the cost of the project.

Project: BRTA's Model Partnership to Improve Rural Regional Transportation for a Greener Future

Location: Berkshire County, Massachusetts, within the 1st Congressional District, represented by Congressman John W. Olver.

Applicant Information:

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BRTA is one of the eight original regional transit authorities founded by the State in 1974 and currently services approximately 500,000 riders with fourteen bus routes, 11 of which are in Pittsfield, four in North Adams and the remaining routes to outlying areas within Berkshire County. Today, there are 15 Regional Transit Authorities (RTA) in the State of Massachusetts, eight of which, including BRTA, provide the only transit options in their region. Berkshire County is not served by other transit options such as the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and is the sole provider of mass transit for Berkshire County. BRTA also provides assorted paratransit services, human service transportation, and work plan transportation. BRTA operates the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center, which connects local bus and taxi services with intercity rail and bus services, with pedestrian access to the central business district.

BRTA's Current Service: The BRTA currently services the 21 towns and 2 cities that comprise Berkshire County by operating a rural fixed route bus system, shown in Figure 1.

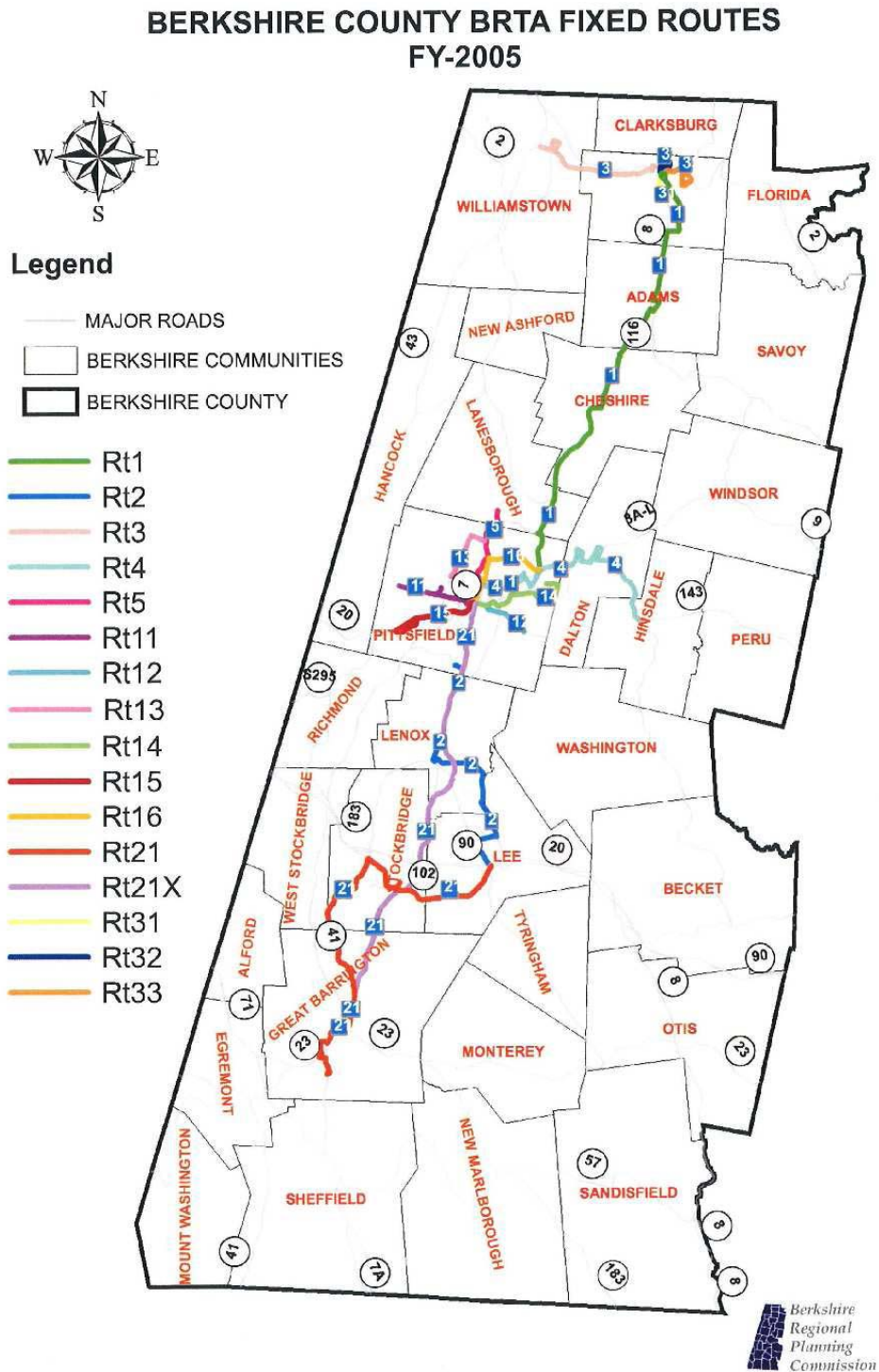
BRTA's Current Fleet and Employment Information: The BRTA currently employs 57 people and operates a 23-vehicle fleet with four 35-foot buses, (one is hybrid diesel/electric), ten 30-foot busses, and nine minibuses. The current fleet operates on diesel fuel and has age-related maintenance and operation issues. The 30-foot buses, which generally offer 350,000 miles of use, all have reached this useful life threshold and have been slated for retirement. The 35-foot buses have expended a third of their capacity and four minibuses have expended almost 75% of their useful life.

BRTA's Capacity to Implement Project: The BRTA has the technical, legal and financial capacity to implement the project. The BRTA's technical staff will deploy the bus system and manage the construction-related project elements.

Application Format

This application is organized as outlined in the Federal Register Notice/Vol. 75, No. 85 May 4, 2010. Supporting information including letters of support and a detailed benefit cost analysis has been posted at www.berkshirerta.com.

Figure 1 Project Location



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Description

This transit project consists of transforming the existing fixed route bus system into three localized bus systems with regional service, includes the addition of Operation and Maintenance Facilities, a state-of-the-art ITS system, an expanded paratransit fleet, bus stops, transfer stations, CNG fueling stations, and the replacement/ conversion of the bus fleet to alternative energy vehicles.

The project will allow the BRTA to better serve Berkshire County by expanding service areas, increasing ridership by 75,000 annually, increasing revenue, expanding service to include weekends, shortening bus trips, providing connections to attractions, and reducing single-occupancy vehicles by 37,500 annually. This will improve the livability of region by improving air quality through the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 7,962 pounds annually, improving human service transportation, increasing employment, initiating transit-oriented development, while saving \$24M over 20 years by improving the efficiency of para-transit service.

The strategic basis for investing in a new service delivery system is founded in the fact that in geographic terms Berkshire County is equivalent in size to the state of Rhode Island yet has three distinct transit markets that can be easily defined and served. These three markets can be identified as: North County, Central County and South County (see Figure 2). The concept for each of the three sub-regions is to develop a local circulator with the capacity to provide deviated fixed route and paratransit service that will also be linked to regional north-central-south service via express bus. The concept of deploying the existing bus service to better serve the needs of Berkshire County has been envisioned for many years but not implemented due to funding constraints. Public support has been voiced for this project in the five public meetings held in February and March of 2009 and documented in the "Analysis of BRTA Fixed Route Bus System Final Report," April 2009, which is available on the BRTA website:

www.berkshirerta.com. Portions of the Plan are included on the Berkshire County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)'s Transportation Improvement Program for FY2010-2013. The State of Good Repair Program funding present an opportunity to make this vision a reality.

The benefits of this new service delivery system include a better match of service to passenger demands (getting passengers where they want to go, when they want to get there), more efficient and cost effective service particularly for the needs of elderly by having the ability thru ITS to deviate service, by effectively generating greater frequency, shorter trips and fuel efficiency.

The BRTA, as a rural transit authority, has limited discretionary funds. As a result, funding to undertake any aspect of this project is only possible through new sources of discretionary funding. This project represents a one-time need that cannot be reasonably funded from FTA program formula allocations or State and local revenues. This one-time investment will allow the BRTA to better serve existing users and to attract future transit users. The project greatly

enhances the service potential of the BRTA and affords transit opportunities and connections that cannot be realized with the existing BRTA bus system.

The BRTA is seeking The State of Good Repair Program funds and views this application as a unique opportunity to receive capital funding to fulfill our goal in implementing a new service delivery system and to accomplish other very worthwhile objectives.

The project's major benefits include:

- improve transportation service delivery in a more cost effective, efficient manner designed for a rural area
- improve environmental protection and foster energy independence
- utilize innovation technology

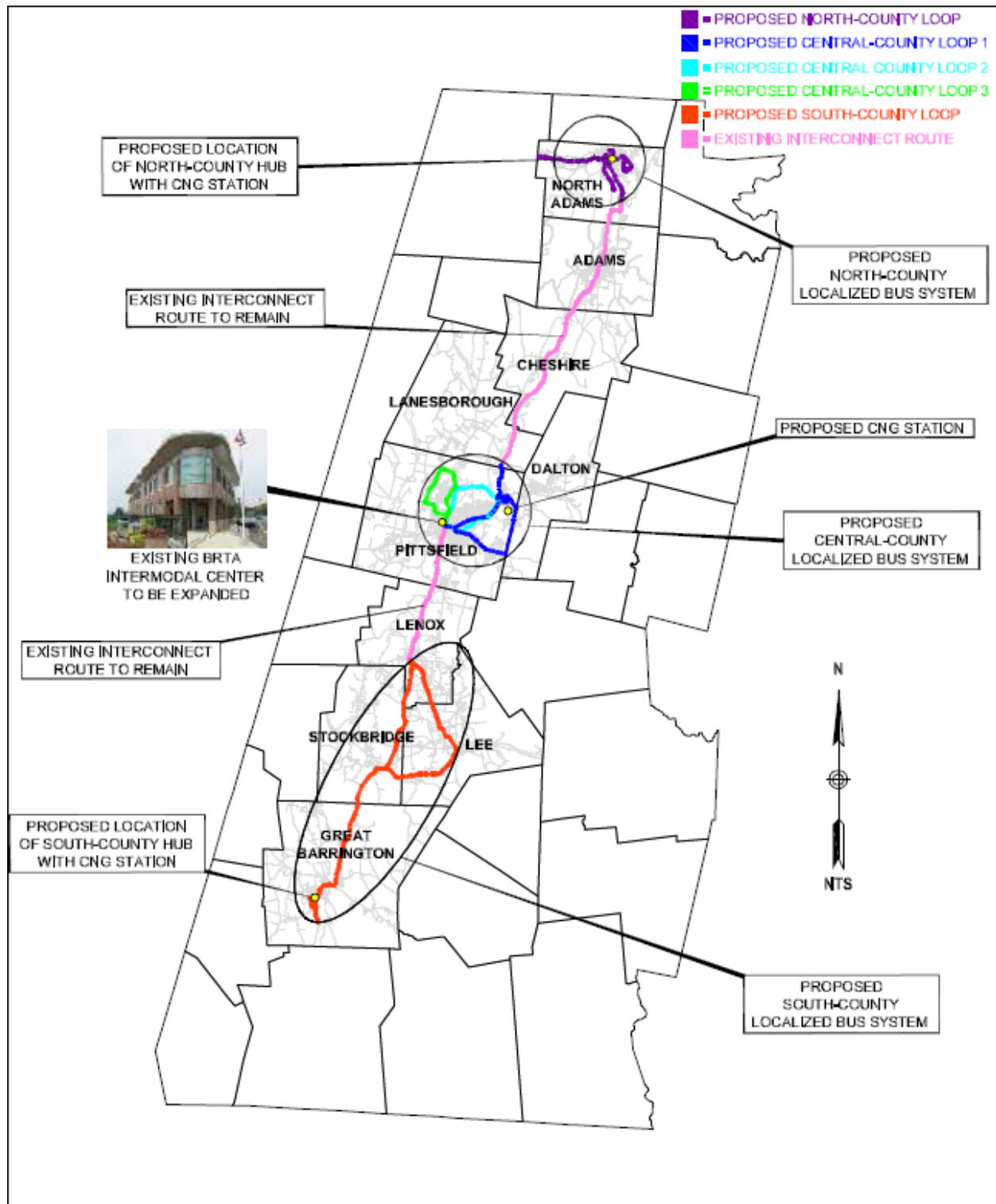
The major project components include:

- the purchase and installation of an ITS system for both fixed route and paratransit vehicles,
- the acquisition, rehabilitation and retrofitting of two automobile dealerships (currently for sale) for the maintenance and operations of BRTA fixed route and paratransit service delivery systems in North and South County,
- the purchase of a paratransit vehicle fleet
- the installation and utilization of compressed natural gas (CNG) for BRTA vehicles located in the three regions,
- the acquisition of CNG vehicles (mini buses), hybrid electric vehicles (35 foot buses), and hybrid vans, and
- expansion of existing BRTA facilities to accommodate both fixed route and paratransit fleet, serve as the dispatch center and ITS system center.

The Plan involves the building and implementation of a \$31.5 million transit service improvement project to better respond to the regional demands and to improve the availability of service for local and regional riders. Through the requested funds, the existing ridership of 500,000 annually is expected to increase by 30 percent. Passengers will experience shorter trips with greater frequency and extended service hours, employment increases will be realized through both the construction/rehab phase and the operation of the facilities.

The project outlined in this multi-dimensional application will provide a variety of value added short- and long-term benefits, not only to the BRTA and its service delivery system, but to the people served by BRTA and who reside in the region.

Figure 2 Proposed Project



Project Components

The components of the proposed project are listed below, followed by a more detailed description:

- Bus System: Convert existing fixed route bus system (shown in Figure 1) to three localized systems with regional access complemented by point deviation through the utilization of a rural ITS support systems (see Figure 2). Extend hours of operation and service. Eliminate flag-stop service in urbanized areas. Reevaluate fare structure.
- Bus Fleet: Convert existing bus fleet to combination of 35-foot hybrid buses, minibuses, and vans; all powered by electricity and compressed natural gas (CNG). Implement Intelligent Transportation System (ITS).
- Paratransit Fleet: Purchase 25 paratransit vehicles, complete with ITS technology, to reduce current program costs and allow greater operational flexibility by housing at remote Operations Centers.
- Operation Centers: Purchase operation centers in North Adams and Great Barrington, and expand the existing Maintenance Facility in Pittsfield to accommodate both fixed route and paratransit vehicles. The proposed North County Operations Center is located at 69 Union Street, North Adams, MA. The proposed South County Operations Center is located at 396-398 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA. Install natural gas fueling stations at all three maintenance and operations facilities.
- Bus Transfer Stations: Build transfer stations in Pittsfield and in downtown Great Barrington.
- Bus Stops: Install state-of-the-art bus stops throughout the three bus loop systems and at designated stops on the regional bus routes.
- Green Technology: Convert current fixed route/paratransit system to CNG with three fuel stations and use of hybrid vehicles.

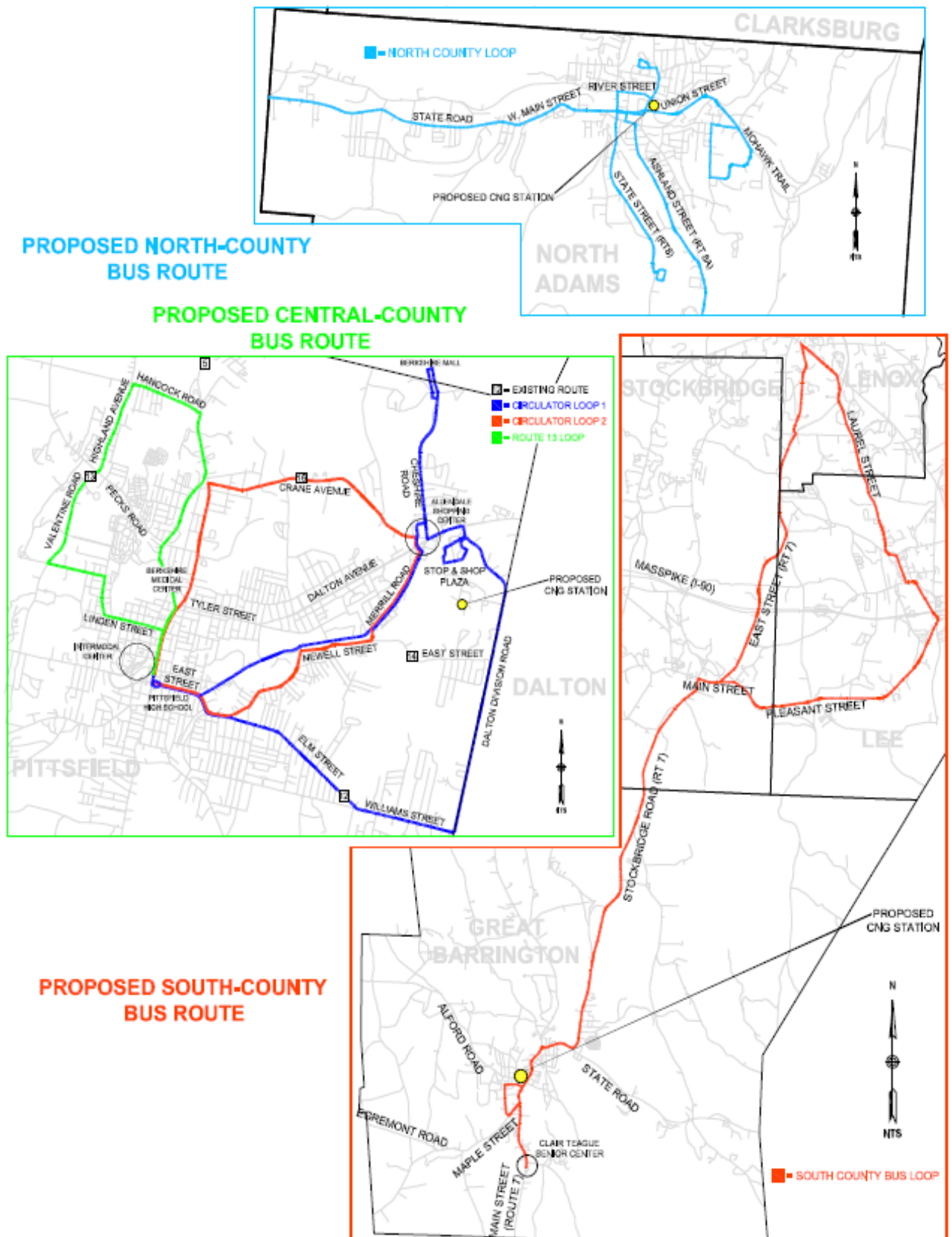
The specific project components, described below, are an ideal match to support the criteria outlined in the State of Good Repair principles.

Bus System

The BRTA currently services 21 towns and 2 cities within Berkshire County by operating a rural fixed route bus system, shown in Figure 1. Berkshire County is located along the western border of Massachusetts, one of the largest counties in Massachusetts, primarily rural in nature, and equivalent in geographic area to the state of Rhode Island. The current transit system suffers from long headways and infrequent stops. The existing Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center, located at One Columbus Avenue in Pittsfield, MA, was opened in 2004 and is in excellent condition. The existing maintenance facility is located at 67 Downing Parkway in Pittsfield, MA.

By deploying the current system to three localized systems with regional access, the BRTA will better serve the densely populated areas of Berkshire County by improving headways, increasing frequency, extending service areas, and extending service times. Headways will be reduced from one hour to 30 minutes. With the implementation of a rural ITS support system, each sub-region will have a local circulator with the capacity to provide deviated point service, which can also be linked to regional north-central-

Figure 3



south service via express bus. The deviated point service will greatly benefit elderly and disabled persons due to the ability to provide flexibility with schedules and routing. The proposed bus system is shown in Figure 2 and the proposed bus loops for North, Central and South Counties are shown in Figure 3.

The flag stop service, which currently occurs in the urbanized areas and is considered a public safety concern, will be eliminated. Designated bus stops will be created and the ITS system will allow passengers to receive real time information at the bus stops.

As part of BRTA's Model Partnership to Improve Rural Regional Transportation for a Greener Future, BRTA will reevaluate the fare structure and extend service hours to include nights and weekends. Service to new destinations will be added, including identified area of environmental justice and regional attractions.

Bus Fleet

The BRTA currently operates a fleet consisting of with four 2006 heavy duty 35-foot buses with an average of over 160,000 miles, the diesel electric hybrid has 120,000 miles; ten 2002 medium duty 30-foot busses with an average 361,000 miles; and nine minivans four 2006 vehicles with an average of 154,000 miles and five 2009 vehicles with an average of 21,000 miles. The current fleet operates on diesel fuel and has age-related maintenance and operation issues. The 30-foot buses, which generally offer 350,000 miles of use, have all been slated for retirement due to mileage and repair costs. Five of these vehicles were slated for replacement last year, but due to limited funding resources, remain on the road. Four minibuses have expended seventy five percent of their useful lives. The 35-foot buses have expended a third of their capacity. (See Fleet Status Report listed below.)

Under BRTA's Model Partnership to Improve Rural Regional Transportation for a Greener Future, the fleet would be replaced with a 28-vehicle fleet consisting of ten 35-foot hybrid busses and eighteen mini-busses of varied capacities, which will provide greater flexibility. The new fleet will operate on compressed natural gas and electricity. Vehicles will be color-coded to reflect the three localized bus systems and the express service.

Berkshire County attracts large numbers of tourists and is a "second home" location to many residents of nearby New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. However, public transportation is currently not available to major visitor attractions. Predominant museums include the Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute, usually referred to simply as "The Clark," an art museum with a large and varied collection located in Williamstown, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMoCA) in North Adams, the Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA), and the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge. Berkshire County is home to a number of performing arts venues including Tanglewood, an estate and music venue in Lenox and Stockbridge, which hosts music festivals each summer.

The proposed plan will allow BRTA to initiate bus transportation to the primary regional attractions. By improving accessibility to these resources, attendance is expected to increase.

The bus fleet will have ITS capabilities including real-time transit traveler information systems, electronic fare boxes and ticket vending machines, which will reduce the manual tasks currently performed by the bus drivers, and allow the drivers to focus on driving and safety.

Fleet Status Report

Fixed Route Vehicles

	Vehicle	Year	Mileage	Mileage since last report	In Service	Out of Service	Transmission Replaced	Bicycle Rack Status	A/C Status	Engine Replaced
1	2679	2006	165,005	5,248	1			Operational	Yes	
2	2680	2006	160,515	3,203	1			Operational	Yes	
3	2681	2006	167,553	4,331	1			Operational	Yes	
4	2682	2006	124,144	3,924	1			Operational	Yes	
5	2608	2006	143,637	3,175	1			Operational	Yes	08/10/09
6	2609	2006	155,230	2,008	1			Operational	Yes	04/28/10
7	2610	2006	162,146	2,291	1		10/28/2009	Operational	Yes	11/24/09
8	2611	2006	162,170	392	1			Operational	Yes	05/24/10
9	2963	2009	23,040	2,908	1			Operational	Yes	
10	2964	2009	26,201	3,865	1			Operational	Yes	
11	2965	2009	26,103	3,855	1			Operational	Yes	
12	2966	2009	22,385	3,375	1			Operational	Yes	
13	2967	2009	26,562	4,171	1			Operational	Yes	
14	2166	2002	377,607	4,249	1			Operational	Yes	12/16/08
15	2167	2002	355,323	4,942	1			Operational	Yes	09/12/08
16	2168	2002	375,857	3,590	1			Operational	Yes	05/12/09
17	2169	2002	355,625	3,201	1			Operational	Yes	11/18/08
18	2170	2002	356,150	3,061	1		11/28/2008	Operational	Yes	11/28/08
19	2171	2002	339,485	2		1		Operational	Yes	02/19/10
20	2172	2002	367,080	3,380	1			Operational	Yes	03/15/10
21	2173	2002	375,859	3,883	1			Operational	Yes	08/10/09
22	2174	2002	363,300	2,966	1		11/25/2008	Operational	Yes	03/15/10
23	2175	2002	375,238	1,350	1			Operational	Yes	07/27/09

ITS/Communication

The planned use of an ITS/communication system for the proposed localized-regional bus service in Berkshire County will allow BRTA to transform an outdated, inefficient rural bus service into a state-of-the-art efficient service that is tailored to the changing needs of the County. The implementation of ITS combined with the addition of mini-buses to the fleet will allow BRTA to run a deviated point system, allowing BRTA to easily incorporate the human service and para-transit rides into the established daily bus runs.

Systems envisioned for improving the BRTA's passenger experience for convenience, information, and faster service include: a real-time passenger information (countdown/arrival) system, automated fare collection equipment, CCTV cameras, and the communications systems necessary to support these systems. Federally-mandated standard Systems Engineering practices will be followed in the development of the systems design, including the development of a Concept of Operations for the integrated systems and a detailed set of traceable systems requirements. The BRTA Model Partnership design will focus on utilizing proven, reliable technologies that leverage existing infrastructure and technology investments. Ease of maintenance will also be an important consideration in the procurement.

Features of the rural transit ITS system include advanced fare collection systems, including smart cards, electronic fare boxes, and ticket vending machines; real-time transit traveler information systems, both on-board and at stops; automatic vehicle location (AVL) and dispatch systems; and CCTV surveillance systems. These features will create a user-friendly bus system and attract more passengers. Passenger comfort will increase due to the safety features of the ITS system such as the CCTV surveillance systems. The bus system will become accessible and attractive to passengers as they will be able to easily recognize the bus system, its boarding and destination locations, and will obtain real-time information and purchase tickets at bus stops and operation centers, on-board vehicles, and from the computer.

The ITS system will allow deviated point service which will greatly enhance the paratransit and human services transportation currently offered by BRTA. This combined with the flexibility of smaller vehicles and the benefit of real time information will reduce the costs associated with these services. The efficiency of the paratransit services will increase 20-40% with the ITS system, and will result in a savings of approximately 24 million dollars over the life of the project.

The ITS/Communication system of the BRTA's Model Partnership to Improve Rural Regional Transportation for a Greener Future will also improve safety. The system provides safety tools for the transit operators as well as surveillance systems.

Operation Centers

Under the BRTA's Model Partnership to Improve Rural Regional Transportation for a Greener Future, new operation centers will be implemented in North Adams and Great Barrington. These operation centers will centralize service for the north and south county loop systems. Existing buildings at 69 Union Street in North Adams and at 396-398 Main Street in Great Barrington (both of which are currently for sale) will be purchased and retrofitted to create the operation/maintenance facilities. Both of these proposed facilities will reclaim and reuse the vacant buildings, recycling the existing properties into useable space. Natural gas fueling stations will be installed at all three maintenance and operations facilities. Bus transfer stations will also be built in Pittsfield and Great Barrington.

The current Maintenance Facility will undergo a modernization and expansion to house both the fixed route and paratransit fleet and provide enough workspace to perform the required maintenance of these vehicles.

Maintainability of these facilities is also a high priority for the BRTA. BRTA will draw on their past experience with operating and maintaining the Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center; particularly as pertains to the design and materials selections of the new facilities.

Paratransit Fleet

The BRTA currently contracts out with a single vendor to perform paratransit services. This current vendor supplies, maintains, fuels, insures, and staffs all vehicles required under the contract. Under the BRTA's Model Partnership to Improve Rural Regional Transportation for a Greener Future, a fleet of 25 paratransit vehicles, complete with the ITS systems, would be purchased, maintained, fueled, and insured by the BRTA. The vendor would become the paratransit service operator with all the capital and some operational costs removed from the current price structure to perform this contract. Under this scenario, the BRTA would have greater oversight over the paratransit vehicles, increased communication between these and the fixed route vehicles, and a reduced annual operating cost.

Bus Stops

The BRTA is rural and downtown bus stops will be state-of-the-art in both passenger accommodation and sustainability. All stops will be convenient, attractive, user-friendly, and above all safe. Advanced traveler information in the form of real-time passenger information will be included at sheltered stops. Safety and pedestrian visibility improvements may include curb extensions, landscaping, signs, pedestrian-activated signals, specialty pavements, and imprinted asphalt patterns, among other techniques. The bus stops implemented under this project will be a great safety improvement over the current flag stop service being utilized.

BRTA patrons are expecting attractive, high quality facilities, which incorporate landscaping features and protection from the elements. 360-degree transparency throughout the occupied spaces of the stops is a priority.

Bus stops will include advanced fare collection systems, including smart cards, electronic fare boxes, and ticket vending machines; real-time transit traveler information systems, and CCTV surveillance systems.

A reinforced concrete pad will be designed to support the bus shelter structures. This pad will support all live and dead loads as well as the design wind and seismic loads specified by the applicable codes.

Structural design, details and plans for the bus shelter/station pad support will be developed as a BRTA standard.

Green Technology

The BRTA's Model Partnership to Improve Rural Regional Transportation for a Greener Future includes the use and implementation of green technology. Power for the bus fleet and bus stations is planned with compressed natural gas. Solar panels are envisioned as the power source for the bus shelter illumination and signage.

Alternative Energy- CNG

Compressed natural gas (CNG) will be used to power the North County and South County Operation Centers, the bus fleet and the existing Pittsfield operation and maintenance facility will be converted to CNG power.

CNG can be used for heating, hot water, drying, cooking, and as engine power. CNG has many advantages over the use of diesel fuel. It is compressed allowing large volumes to be stored in relatively compact space, such as on board a bus. Natural gas is primarily a domestic product with over 95% of the natural gas supplies originating in North America. NG is lighter than air, non toxic to breathe or touch, and cannot contaminate the soil or groundwater.

In terms of air quality, CNG emits 95% less particulate matter (PM), also known as soot, 90% less carbon monoxide (CO), 55% less nitrogen oxide (NOx), and 30% less carbon dioxide (CO₂) compared to diesel fueled vehicles and 20% less CO₂ compared to gasoline-fueled vehicles. CNG buses are typically 50% quieter than their diesel-fueled counterparts and are available directly from the factory.

CNG is typically stored in above-ground vessels and has no under-ground storage requirements. CNG does not require fuel deliveries to the stations as the natural gas is delivered via existing underground natural gas infrastructure, which is one of the safest means of energy delivery. If CNG were to leak from the storage vessel, it dissipates harmlessly in the atmosphere.

CNG is an innovative alternative form of energy that is cleaner (near zero emissions), quieter, and stably-priced.

Evaluation Criteria

The project will produce a state of good repair outcome (as defined in the Federal Register Notice) for each of the three Project Evaluation Criteria.

1. Planning and Prioritization at Local/Regional Level: The localized-regional bus system will introduce new opportunities to use public transit with extended service locations and hours of operations. The existing system will be transformed from a fixed route bus system with long headways to a localized-regional bus system with shorter headways, increased frequency, and shorter trips to better serve the more densely populated areas of Berkshire County.

The project is consistent with the goals of the Berkshire Regional Transportation Plan by enhancing life through transportation, supporting each of the eight goals listed below:

BRT Plan Goals	Project Compliance
Support economic vitality	Bus stations will create transit orientated development, connect workers with employment opportunities, and link transit to educational opportunities.
Increase accessibility and mobility	Localized-regional bus system will run more frequently and serve new locations.
Protect the environment	Convert buses to CNG. Localized regional bus service will reduce bus travel distances and reduce single occupancy vehicles.
Enhance modal integration	Localized-regional bus system reaches new locations.
Promote efficient management system	ITS implementation allows improved bus and paratransit system management. Project can be implemented in stages maximizing efficiency.
Increase safety	Project reduces the number of vehicles on the roadway and decreases length of travel for bus routes.
Increase transportation security	ITS implementation provides new options for increased transportation security.

The project supports the general principals of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) by reducing the dependency on the automobile by making alternative modes of transportation more accessible and convenient. Also, the Berkshire MPO encourages transportation projects that revitalize the downtown areas and provide convenient transportation access and delivery service to employment centers, such as the industrial park situated on the former site of General Electric. The deployment of the current bus route allows the BRTA to better serve downtown areas and link to employment centers, particularly by

introducing loop service to North and South Counties. Finally, elements of the project are included in the Berkshire County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)'s Transportation Improvement Program for FY2010-2013 and the draft FY2011 - 2014.

The BRTA's Model Partnership to Improve Rural Regional Transportation for a Greener Future has local and regional approval. The Town of Great Barrington and the Cities of North Adams and Pittsfield, the locations of the new and expanded stations, are supportive of the project and are partners in this endeavor. The Plan is supported by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and conforms to the county and local transportation plans. To view the Letters of Support for this project, please visit the BRTA website www.berkshirerta.com.

The 20% local match will be the use of Toll Credits administered through MASS DOT.

2. Project Readiness for Implementation

The proposed project can be initiated immediately upon authorization of funding and can be completed within two years. The restructuring of the bus system can be implemented at the onset with the use of temporary stations while the renovations of the three bus stations are underway. Available properties have already been identified for the operation and maintenance facilities. Conversion of the bus fleet can be accomplished incrementally while utilizing and maintaining the existing fleet. By implementing the project incrementally, asset management approaches can be employed to optimize the long-term cost structure.

The BRTA's Model Partnership to Improve Rural Regional Transportation for a Greener Future is technically feasible and can be initiated quickly. The plan is not technically complicated, as it involves the deployment of an existing condition and the conversion of existing buildings to bus stations. The purchase of a new bus fleet and an ITS system is feasible since adequate information is available and competitive vendors exist. Construction of bus stops, transfer stations, and CNG fueling stations do not involve complicated design or construction methods.

The locations of the North and South County Operation Centers have been selected and involve properties that are currently on the market for sale. Therefore, eminent domain will not be required for this project. The friendly purchase and rehabilitation of these properties is supported by the municipalities, will eliminate blight, and will create new opportunities in urban renewal areas and centralized business districts.

Implementation of this financially feasible plan involves upfront costs. As the plan is implemented, ridership is expected to increase, thereby increasing revenue. Also, the plan can be implemented in stages. For example, the bus fleet can be converted over a period of time since the existing fleet remains operable. The three-bus loop systems can be initiated one at a time.

In consultation with FTA Region 1, BRTA has been advised that the project is expected to require only a programmatic Categorical Exclusion (CE) to complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. A documented CE or Environmental Assessment (EA) will not be required. The environmental approval process will coincide with the design

phase and is expected to be complete within three months. No delays due to environmental permitting are anticipated.

The project does not require legislative approval. Changes to the bus routes and fare schedules require the approval of the BRTA Advisory Board, which consists of an elected official and a representative from each of 23 communities

3. Technical, Legal, & Financial Capacity

The BRTA has the technical, legal and financial capacity to implement the project. The BRTA's technical staff will deploy the bus system and manage the construction-related project elements. Consultants from AVSG and other sources will provide the added technical expertise for the construction/retro fit of the CNG facilities.

Project Budget

The anticipated project costs include the purchase of: replacement fixed route vehicles, paratransit fleet, rural ITS system for both fleets, acquisition and retrofit of existing automobile dealerships converted to Operation Centers, expansion of the Maintenance Facility, and construction of bus stops and bus transfer stations as outlined as follows:

Project Costs:

Vehicle Fleets/ITS	\$9,625,375
Operation Centers	\$11,866,700
Maint. Expansion	\$4,370,625
Bus Stops/Transfers	<u>\$5,600,000</u>
Total:	\$31,462,700

Federal Funds Requested: \$25.17M, which is 80% of the project costs.

Matching Funds: \$6.3M, which is 20% of the project costs. The matching funds are available through the use of Toll Credits.

Project Schedule

Due to the support of stakeholders and project partners, the proposed project can be initiated immediately upon authorization of funding and can be completed within two years. The restructuring of the bus system can be implemented at the onset with the use of temporary stations. Properties have already been identified for the operation and maintenance facilities and for the wind turbines. Conversion of the bus fleet can be accomplished incrementally with the continued use of the existing fleet. A programmatic Categorical Exclusion is anticipated for this project and therefore, delays due to environmental permitting are not expected.

Conclusion

A benefit-cost analysis conducted for the BRTA's Model Partnership to Improve Rural Regional Transportation for a Greener Future and resulted in a benefit cost ratio of 82, indicating that the immediate and long-term benefits of this project will profit Berkshire County for the life of the project. The consequential benefits far outweigh the immediate costs of this project

demonstrating that the investment is constructive, advantageous and advisable. Detailed information on the benefit cost analysis has been posted on www.berkshirerta.com.

The project costs have been listed previously. The benefits are as follows:

Project Benefits:

Improved Bus System	\$42,417,000
Employment Benefits	\$2,504,772,000
Air Quality Benefits	<u>\$34,965,000</u>
Total:	\$2,582,154,000

The improved bus system will have economic benefit since the ridership will increase, the existing ridership will experience shorter trips, the fare revenue will increase due to extended routes and service hours, and money spent on paratransit ridership will decrease due to the increased efficiency and flexibility of the proposed system.

The project will create construction jobs as a result of the renovations needed to retrofit the existing buildings into Operation Centers, the conversion of the existing operation and maintenance facility to CNG, and the construction of the bus stops and transfer stations. The project will also increase employment at the BRTA itself as additional employees will be required to manage the bus systems, drive the buses, etc.

The project will result in benefits that have not been monetized as well. Health benefits will be realized through the improvements to air quality, the project will extend bus service to environmental justice locations, and the project will create time savings for its users.

The BRTA has past experience in successfully obtaining and managing grant funds. For example, in 2004 BRTA received \$12M in federal funds to construct the ITC.

BRTA's common practice is to set goals for disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE) on its construction projects. A DBE goal will be required for the contracts associated with this project. BRTA encourages contractor good faith efforts to connect disadvantaged workers with job opportunities, and will coordinate efforts with contractors for this project. The BRTA requires contractors to certify good labor practices, such as training workers in OSHA. Anti-discrimination policies are included in contracts. The BRTA will play an active role in monitoring contractor compliance with contractual agreement, DBE goals, state and federal laws, prevailing wages, and job training requirements.

BRTA is the recipient of annual federal funds and adheres to the anti-discriminatory requirements attached to that funding. BRTA does not discriminate based on race, gender, or sexual orientation and employs a diverse workforce. BRTA's record demonstrates that they have managed federal funding in a responsible, efficient, and cost effective manner.